

visitbilbao.info/excursions

There are many places near Bilbao that can make an ideal day or half-day trip. At the mouth of the Nervión river, we find the impressive Bizkaia transporter bridge, and the villages around the bay, full of history and interest. Travelling slightly further away, we can choose between a coastal or an in-land route. The coast of Bizkaia has beautiful beaches and traditional fishing villages; their fishermen were capturing whales from rowing boats a thousand years ago. The in-land is an abrupt landscape, with well preserved natural enclaves in deep valleys surrounded by steep mountains.

Near Bilbao

Puente Colgante, Portugalete and Santurtzi route

On the 16th of July 2006 the Unesco World Heritage Committee declared it a World Heritage Monument. The



Bizkaia's Transporter Bridge was the first bridge-ferry in the world and the only one in service at present. The bridge has become the leading cultural asset of the Basque Country and it is the first monument in Spain included in Unesco's Industrial Heritage category.

The Bizkaia Transporter Bridge is a colossal iron structure across the Nervión river that joins the towns of Getxo and Portugalete in just before the Abra bay. Designed by Alberto de Palacio in 1893, this first-in-its-kind bridge

solved the problem of communicating the two sides of the river without affecting the merchant ships traffic. Today, a lift takes you to a viewing platform at the top, with magnificent views of the area.

Dirección
Barria, 3 Bajo
48930 Las Arenas (Getxo)
Tel. 94 480 10 12 / 94 463 88 54
Web
www.puente-colgante.com

Portugalete – founded in 1322 by María Díaz de Haro “La Buena” (the Good one), Lady of Bizkaia – has been instrumental in the economic development of the area. Built as a fortress by the river, in XVI C. it initiated an economic and demographic growth that continues today. But it was during the XIX C. when the town experienced its major growth with the construction of the railway, the bridge, and many other buildings. During these years it became a popular Summer destination for its beach and spa, and the town acquired the character that still defines it today. The second half of the XX C. gave it its

final demographic push, with the industrialization of the neighbouring mining towns.

Its historical centre offers several interesting sites:

The Santa Clara convent, the Plaza de la Ranchería, the medieval village, the Basilica of Santa María, the sculpture of Don Lope García de Salazar, the Salazar tower, the Wall gate, Calle Salcedo, Casa de Bustamante, the City Hall, the monument to Victor Chavarri, etc.

+ info
www.portugalete.com

The next town is Santurtzi, although the borders between the two are often unclear, and often they may seem one city to the visitor. Although documented as a settlement since the XI century, Santurtzi only became officially a town in 1983. Its uniqueness comes from the two contrasting and co-existing characters of the village, that of a heavy industry port, and of an



The Harriluze searchlight

authentic fishing village. Do try the grilled sardines at the fishing port, and enjoy the XIX C. bourgeois villas in the

promenade between the nautical college and the bridge.

+ info
www.ayto-santurtzi.net

Abra bay and Puerto Viejo route

The Abra bay was adapted for large merchant ships by engineer Evaristo Churruca at the beginning of the XX century. The walk dedicated to him initiates a pleasant promenade along the eastern side of the bay, starting at the bridge and finishing at the Puerto Viejo Here we find the high bourgeois mansions, the private yacht clubs, and the beaches of Las Arenas and Algorta (sunbathing only). At the initial part of the walk, there are several interesting mansions built towards the end of XIX C. and the beginning of the XX: Palacio Kai-Alde, Palacio Luis Allende, Casa Cisco (all three by Manuel María Smith), the Hotel Embarcadero and the

Club Marítimo de Vela yachting club. As the walk makes a sharp left-turn, we find the Palacio Lezama-

Legizamon (with one of the best private libraries in the country), the Harriluze searchlight, and the quay, followed by the Puerto Deportivo marina complex, and the hotels Tamarises and Igeretxe in front of the Ereaga beach, and the unusual Casa-Faro de los Náufragos (a farm-like construction built over arches). Past Ereaga beach we find Puerto Viejo, the old Algorta fishing village. This is a charming group of traditional fishermen's houses built on a steep hill, and is an ideal place to just hang around or enjoy one of its fish restaurants at the top, or the pintxos in one of its old taverns.

+ info
www.getxo.net

In Bizkaia

Coastal villages route

Estimated time: 1 day

Starting in Bilbao, take the N-634 road to Plentzia, a Summer vacation town with an ideal beach for windsurfing. It is adjacent to Gorliz and the two beaches actually meet. From here there are two possible alternatives:

1. Continue from Gorliz to Armitza, a small fishing village.
2. Take the BI-3121 towards in-land Mungia, and visit the Butron Castle.

From either point the next destination is Bakio, famous for both its surfing and Txakoli (local dry wine). We leave Bakio through the BI-

635 towards Bermeo. A few kilometres away, we find one of the most beautiful sights in Bizkaia, the San Juan de Gaztelugatxe hermitage, and



San Juan de Gaztelugatxe

the Aketxe islet. Next stop is Bermeo, an old fishing village full of character, where we can visit the old port, the church of Santa Eufemia, and the Ercilla tower with its Fisherman's Museum,

The same coastal road takes us to Mundaka, a surfers' major destination for its left wave, and a pleasant village to walk around and enjoy views of the Gernika river mouth and the Izaro island. From there, we take the road towards Gernika, which takes us through the Urdaibai biosphere reserve. This is a protected natural space on both sides of the Gernika river, with multitude of birds and plants, worth a detailed visit. After this, the town of Gernika, bombed in 1937 and immortalised by Picasso, is the site of the most important symbols of Basque culture: the Tree of Gernika, the Casa de Juntas, and the Peace Museum.

From Gernika, we take the BI-638 to Elantxobe, a quiet

fishing village located in an spectacular natural enclave; its tranquility is only disturbed on July 22nd, during the fiesta of La Magdalena.

The tour concludes in Lekeitio, a medieval village set in very pleasant surroundings, famous for its “Geese” fiesta, and with an attractive old part, where we find the church of Santa Maria.

Public transport
infobizkaibus@bizkaia.net
www.euskotren.es
www.metrobilbao.com

+ info
www.mundaka.org
www.lekeitio.com
www.gernika-lumo.net

Encartaciones and Carranza valley route

Estimated time: half day

The Encartaciones area occupies the most western area of Bizkaia, and it has been historically the main mining area in the Basque Country. We leave Bilbao on the BI-636 to Güeñes, where we can visit the Parroquia de

Santa María church. We continue towards Zalla to see the Palacio Barroco de los Murga; on the way to La Herrera, we visit the San Pedro Zariketxe hermitage, where according to legend, one must enter and leave through different doors while throwing slat, in order to frighten away evil spirits. Next stop is one of the oldest Basque towns, Balmaseda, with its medieval layout, and interesting sites like the Puente Viejo (Old bridge), which used to be the customs office, the City Hall, and the gothic San Severino church.

From Balmaseda we take the BI-630 and then the BI-2701 to see the Casa de Juntas of Avellaneda, an ancient site for the local government council during the Middle Ages. Then we take the BI-630 through Traslaviña and Villaverde de Trucios, to reach the Carranza valley after climbing the Escrita port. On its descent, take the turning towards Virgen del Buen Suceso sanctuary, a good place for a picnic and sightseeing. In this valley we also find the Bizkaia ecological park, located in El Karpin farm, and visit the near-by Pozalagua cave.



Train
www.feve.es

+ info
www.karrantza.com
www.enkartur.net